

**CONSULATE-GENERAL OF JAPAN**

909 Fannin St. Suite 3000 Houston, TX 77010

Contact: Alisa Tobin, Information & Cultural Affairs Section
TEL: 713-652-2977 x 2115 E-MAIL: alisa.tobin@ho.mofa.go.jp

Johnston Middle School is Awarded the Japan Foundation “Salary Assistance Grant for Japanese-Language Courses”

On Tuesday, August 20, the Consulate-General of Japan in Houston will present the Houston Independent School District with the Japan Foundation grant of \$28,000. The funds will be used to continue the Japanese language program at Johnston Middle School.

Johnston Middle School has been the bridge for Japanese language studies between Kolter Elementary School and Bellaire High School for approximately 25 years. Johnston offers a three-year sequential program which awards one high school credit at the end of eighth grade. Johnston students regularly go on to complete Japanese II A/B, III, IV, & V at Bellaire and often receive top honors at the Texas-State Japanese Language Speech Competition, even advancing to the national and then the international contest held in Tokyo, Japan. Thanks to the support of the Japan Foundation, Johnston Middle School hopes to develop its Japanese program and rekindle the cooperation with Kolter Elementary to reinstate Kolter’s program, which was recently discontinued due to budget cutbacks.

Johnston Middle School has also been at the center of the Japan-America Society of Houston “Houston-Chiba Youth Exchange” for over 25 years. For the last four years, all students chosen to travel to Houston’s Japanese sister-city of Chiba have been from Johnston Middle School. In return, Johnston Middle School families have hosted visiting students from Chiba. This exchange encourages Johnston students to continue their pursuit of Japanese language study.

A ceremony to present the funds will be held at the official residence of the Consul-General of Japan and be presided over by Acting Consul-General Takahiko Watabe. This occasion will also serve as the welcome reception for the students from Chiba, who are visiting Houston from August 16 to 29. The students will be hosted by Johnston Middle School as before and the grant will be awarded in the presence of many local supporters of the program. The Consulate-General of Japan in Houston sincerely hopes that the Japan Foundation grant will help Johnston Middle School continue and expand their program which promotes the study of Japanese language and culture in the greater Houston community.

For more information or if you plan to cover this event, please contact Alisa Tobin at 713-652-2977 x 2115

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